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Senator Kerry

Priorities for NEH

Question 1: What are your highest priorities for the NEH in the next four years?

Answer: I think that many of the programs and priorities now in place at the Endowment look very much to the future. For example:

- the commitment to preserving humanities books and documents;
- the efforts to restore quality courses in the humanities to the core of the curricula in our schools;
- the revitalization of humanities teaching and teachers; and
- initiatives for improving humanities programming for out-of-school audiences.

I endorse these policies and will make them the cornerstone of my administration.

Senator Kerry

Support for Projects

Question 2: Are there projects the NEH now supports or has supported in the past that you think should not have received support?

Answer: I am not familiar with any such projects.

Senator Kerry

Minorities on Panels

Question 3: In your opinion, should NEH see to it that women and members of minority groups serve on panels reviewing projects immediately relevant to these groups?

Answer: I understand that it is NEH policy that review panelists are selected strictly on the basis of their competence to evaluate the type of proposals that they are to be called upon to review. Race, sex and ethnicity are not considered. I understand, moreover, that even though merit is the only criterion in making up NEH review panels, women and minorities are more fully represented on panels than they are in the humanities academic professions.

I fully concur in the propriety of this policy and would see to it that it is continued during my Chairmanship.

Senator Kerry

Greatest Immediate Need

Question 4: What is the greatest immediate need in the humanities?
How do you intend for the NEH to respond?

Answer: If I had to isolate one over-riding need in the humanities today, it would be the necessity to restore quality teaching and learning in the humanities in our nation's schools. This is important to the nation because it builds citizens who are knowledgeable of their heritage, and it is important to the individual because the humanities provide a way of illuminating the human experience.

Many studies in recent years have documented that our schools and colleges have been deficient in the quality of education offered to our youth. NEH has helped call attention to this problem as it relates to the humanities and has supported programs to revive humanities teaching in the schools. As chairman, I will continue NEH grant support in this area and use the chairman's national stature to encourage state and local authorities to upgrade humanities education.